



In the Matter of a Minnesota Power/Great River Energy, Application for Certification of a High Voltage Transmission Line and Substation Projects in the vicinity of the cities of Badoura (Crow Wing, Cass and Hubbard Counties) and Tower (St. Louis County)

**CONTENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL
REPORT
COMMISSIONER DECISION**

PUC Docket No. E015/TL-05-867

The above matter has come before the Commissioner of the Department of Commerce (the Department) for a decision on the content of the Environmental Report (ER) to be prepared in consideration of the Application for Certification from MP/GRE on the proposed Badoura and Tower high voltage transmission line (HVTL) projects.

The Routing and Siting Unit of the Department held public meetings on December 7, 2005 and December 8, 2005, in the towns of Backus and Tower, respectively. The purpose of the meetings was to provide the public with information on the two projects and to solicit input into the content of the ER. The public was given until January 10, 2006, to submit written comments.

Having reviewed the matter, and having consulted with staff, I hereby make the following Order on the content of the ER:

MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED

The ER will address the following matters for each of the proposed projects:

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Project Description
- 1.2 Project Location
- 1.3 Project Purpose
- 1.4 Sources of Information

2.0 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 PUC Certification Requirement
- 2.2 Environmental Report Requirement

3.0 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROJECT

- 3.1 No-build Alternative
- 3.2 Conservation Alternatives
- 3.3 Existing Line/System Improvements
- 3.4 Generation Alternatives
- 3.5 Alternative Corridor

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

- 4.1 Description of Environmental Setting

- 4.2 Impacts on Human Settlement
 - 4.2.1 Socioeconomic
 - 4.2.2 Displacement
 - 4.2.3 Noise
 - 4.2.4 Aesthetics
 - 4.2.5 Radio and Television Interference
 - 4.2.6 Human Health and Safety
 - 4.2.6.1 Electric/Magnetic Fields
 - 4.2.6.1 Stray Voltage
 - 4.3 Impacts on Land-based Economics
 - 4.3.1 Recreation
 - 4.3.2 Prime Farmland
 - 4.3.3 Transportation
 - 4.3.4 Mining and Forestry
 - 4.3.5 Economic Development
 - 4.3.5 Archeological and Historic Resources
 - 4.4 Impacts on Natural Environment
 - 4.4.1 Air Quality
 - 4.4.2. Water Quality
 - 4.4.2.1 Surface and Groundwater
 - 4.4.2.2 Wetlands
 - 4.4.3 Soils and Geology
 - 4.4.4 Flora and Fauna
 - 4.5 Rare and Unique Natural Resources
- 5.0 PERMITS AND APPROVALS REQUIRED**

ISSUES OUTSIDE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

The ER will not consider the impacts or mitigative measures associated with specific alignments within the proposed corridors. Site specific concerns (i.e., along specific alignments) will be addressed in the subsequent HVTL Route Permitting process.

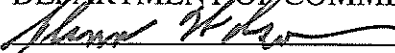
The ER will only identify the general potential impacts from the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed HVTL along the broad corridor(s), and the measures generally available to mitigate these potential impacts.

SCHEDULE

The ER shall be completed by March 1, 2006.

Signed this 17 day of Jan, 2006

STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE


Glenn Wilson, Commissioner